

### WILL WHITE SLAVERY BE ESTABLISHED?

Whether labor is advancing or losing ground is a question that may startle some readers, but when we consider the remarkable events which have turned the eyes of all civilization upon labor circles during the past twelve months we must admit that the question is a pertinent one. Without a doubt the United States has been making very important additions to the history of the world during the past year. Nobody will question that what has occurred in labor circles since last spring is of more consequence, and is farther reaching in its effects, than the events of any quarter of a century of labor history that has preceded this single remarkable year. At no time since the terrible butchery of men prominent in the labor movement, which followed the uprising of the English laborers in 1381 when 1500 of them were put to death, has there been such bold and determined attempts to crush out the labor movement as this year has witnessed.

While the series of events in the labor world, embracing Coal Creek, Coeur d'Alene, Homestead, Buffalo, and now Toledo, have startled and alarmed the most conservative and the most hopeful it can hardly be said that the full significance of the movement on the part of the moneyed classes has dawned upon the laboring people. We have been so busy boasting of our liberty and independence while the enemy perfected the plans of enslavement that it is likely to take us some time to grasp the situation.

It has been said that the laboring man's brain will not work until his stomach is empty, and it may be added that he will not stop boasting his independence until he is completely enslaved. We no longer have any independence and perhaps the surest way to arouse the laboring people to a sense of their danger is to frankly admit the truth.

Let us be honest about it. The employing classes have the laws, the courts to apply them and the military power to

enforce the mandates of the courts. What more does any class need to completely enslave any other class? To get down to the real question involved, wherein is the material difference between the black slaves of thirty years ago and the white ones of today?

The wages of the black slave were fixed without his consent. They were paid in food, clothing and shelter. His occupation was chosen for him and he could not change it nor quit work of his own accord. If he undertook to increase his wages (get more to eat and wear) he was forcibly prevented and punished. If he attempted to quit work (run away) he was seized and brought back, punished for his "crime" and kept at work under guard. He labored a lifetime, got only a portion of the wealth he created and died as he had lived, in poverty.

In what important point, under our rapidly changing condition, does the white wage slave of today differ? His wages are as certainly fixed without his consent because, if he attempts to raise them as at Homestead, capital has the power to lock him out and starve him into acceptance as happened there. These wages are paid in cash, but since that cash is barely enough to buy about the same food, clothing and shelter given the black slave where is the difference?

Up to the present time the white laborer has been free in the matter of occupation and at liberty to quit work at will. But the Toledo injunction cases have established another "right" for capital—the right to forbid labor to quit its service at all. It is true that this is done only in a single business—railroading—but it has only begun. It is also true that it is done under cover of a pretense of protecting the welfare of the public. But that is of no consequence. Anything can be brought within range of the same flimsy excuse. For example, if the farm hands objected to working for their rate of pay it could be held that their failure to work endangered the public's food supply, and a strike of the weavers could be suppressed by the courts because the

textile output would be insufficient for public use.

The question is not whether the rulings of the courts can be sustained by justice. The fact is that they will be sustained by the jails. The man who looks upon the past record of the plutocracy and then expects things to be done because they are right is simply insane. The laborer who thinks that surely so great a wrong as literally forcing him to accept the wages which the employing class is pleased to offer or be imprisoned, would not be perpetrated by American courts will do well to remember that these same courts have time and again upheld human slavery and punished those who did not submit. How much does a well fed aristocrat care whether a man's skin is white or black?

As the case now stands the laboring man may go to work when he pleases at the wages then paid. If he attempts to raise them he can be locked out. If he tries to keep others from taking his place he can be sent to the penitentiary for rioting (witness Homestead). If he objects to scabs who will work for a lower rate they are put in his place by the troops (witness Buffalo). If he, aside from the question of wages or scabs, peaceably quits work he can't conscientiously do he is arrested and held in "contempt of court" and made to work or go to jail (witness Toledo).

Now, this is the beginning. It is merely the first step in plutocracy's program of white slavery. It requires but little use of the imagination to see rapid changes for the worse in the lot of the laboring man. Look at the progress toward serfdom that has been made in a single year! Twelve months ago labor had something to say about wages. Today it has nothing. Then we could strike with some show of success. Now we can not. At that time our worst enemy was the Pinkerton thugs who could be met on even terms and against whom public sentiment was strong. At present it is the militia, respected by the people and backed by the state itself. A year ago

not even a corporation thought of denying the right of any man to quit work at any time or place. Now the courts have declared him to have no such right. In the face of this who will venture to guess what the next year will develop?

There are a few things it is well to remember. One is that enough has already been done to establish the fact that the moneyed class intend to use the courts, the penitentiaries and the military to the severest point possible in crushing labor. Another is that there will be no difficulty in finding precedents for any atrocity. "What has once been done can be done again" may become plutocracy's motto. Let us remember that the justices of the peace, who belonged to the employing classes, once fixed the wages of labor; that anybody who refused to work for that price was sent to jail until they would; that any attempt to raise wages was a crime punishable by imprisonment; that a code of laws was in force to keep the laborer in practically the same condition as the black slaves before referred to and that these laws were sternly enforced by penalties ranging from a day in jail to hanging by the neck until dead. Let us remember, too, that our present organizations are young and that it is only within a few years that they have seriously interfered with the triumphant march of plutocracy. Having found them a barrier in the way, the plutocrats have decreed their destruction and they will stop short of no infamy in a most determined effort to revive the white slavery of the past.

There will be those who doubt that the civil machinery of our country could be used for such a purpose. It does seem improbable now but it may not seem at all so tomorrow. Who, a month ago would have believed our courts could have been used to compel a man to work against his will and his conscience? Who will be surprised if the corporations find a way to compel a man to go from one road to another and scab outright to "protect the traveling public?" Nobody.

In the light of recent events it is a

temperate statement to say that labor is losing ground and is falling back dangerously near the point of actual slavery. It is of no consequence whether cash is paid as wages if the pay amounts only to food, clothing and shelter. It is immaterial whether he is kept at work by an overseer or a court. It is of little importance whether he is guarded by a bloodhound or a soldier. It is of no moment whether he is ordered to work by a master or a steam whistle or whether he is driven by a whip or by the pangs of hunger. And what is to be done about it all? That is the problem we face today. Labor must solve it—and right speedily, too—or humbly kneel at the feet of the triumphant plutocracy.

L. W. ROGERS.

#### EXPELLED MEMBERS.

This is my introduction in writing to the JOURNAL. I would have written before but had nothing worth writing about. I wish to say a few words about expelled members, and the cause of my so wishing is the action of the members of the Las Vegas Lodge. There are five in particular, viz.: John Samberson, Fred Breffeld, John Elmer, John Moskins and Joseph Kennedy. The above named, when the carmen were trying to secure a schedule, were so afraid of their positions and so contemptible that they not only quit the order, but wrote to Mr. John Player not to pay any attention to the carmen, and if they needed any help they (the worse than scabs) would stand by them. The last one named was under the influence of liquor when he signed this letter, and is sorry, and has pride and principle enough not to attempt to be reinstated in the order he so greatly insulted. Now, 'tis true the names of all the expelled members are printed in the JOURNAL, but how many of us are able to remember back six months or a year the names of those expelled at that time. I think it would be a very good thing if each lodge were to draw up a sort of a black ball list and put it up in some prominent place in the

lodge room, and through the help of the JOURNAL put the name of all the expelled and such as those who withdrew from the Las Vegas Lodge on it. Then when a man presented himself as a carman, and we had any doubt as to his being genuine or not, we could refer to the great register and settle our doubts; this way is the only way I can see that we can protect ourselves, for we cannot change the signs and passwords every time a member is expelled; and if they have the signs how are we going to tell? A man went through Raton, N. M., about seven weeks ago and claimed to be a carman. He had the proper signs, but his card was issued for a year, and on that account they mistrusted him. Had they then the great register to refer to they could easily have settled it; but they thought (when they hadn't sufficient proof to think otherwise) that it was a fault of the person issuing the card, and they helped him as these gentlemanly boys always help a carman. Now, I haven't any idea this will be published, for it is too lengthy and contains very little, but I hope you will have read it through before sending it to the waste basket.

DUDE CAR WHACKER.

It is again necessary to call attention to the matter in which monthly and quarterly reports are forwarded, (if sent at all). Some of our lodges are giving this matter of reports particular attention, while others seem to put it off from one meeting to another, and when it is forwarded is made out on ordinary paper with but half the information required. Give this matter your careful and prompt attention and you will be surprised to find how easy it is to do things right.

Our Grand Chief writes us from Denver, Col., that the outlook of our Brotherhood is most bright in that section. Lodges visited on the trip are adding new members, and prospering generally. He is to reach Portland, Tacoma, Ellensburg and other points on the coast before his return.